

by the same; (299) "*Une Gracilleuse*," by W. Fisher; (291) "*Dressing for the Day*," by George Cruikshank; (403) "*La Petite Diep-poise*," by A. Solomon; (301) "*Dismasted Ship off the Welsh Coast*," by S. P. Jackson; all deserve mention.

ON THE FORMATION OF A MEDIEVAL MUSEUM.

THE formation of a Public Museum of Mediæval Art, accessible alike to architects, architectural students, sculptors, carvers, decorators, and all others engaged in the different branches of practical art, has long been a favourite project with me; but, though I once ventured to attempt an agitation on the subject, the scheme has, from the many difficulties which seemed to surround it, remained, with me, as with the many others who have thought of it—in *nubibus*.

I think that the desirableness of such a museum must be admitted by every one. Even to those who are not especially concerned in questions of art, or of antiquarian interest, it must be clear that, if we make costly collections of the works of the great nations of ancient days, as of Egypt, Assyria, Greece, and Rome, and treasure them, not only on the ground of their intrinsic worth as works of art, but as exponents of the history of the world, and as the footsteps of the mighty nations which have in turn taken the lead in power and civilisation, it is equally important that we should collect specimens of the work of our own and of kindred nations—works which, though they do not claim the interest which attaches to very high antiquity, are still especially interesting to ourselves as illustrating the history of our own civilisation, and as being more or less connected with our own religious and civil institutions and customs, and which belong to a style of art equally original, and are, at least, equally remarkable with any of those before alluded to.

To those, however, among us who are engaged in reviving this our native style of architecture, or rather of founding upon it as a basis a style of our own, such a collection is not only important but *absolutely necessary*.

I am as strongly opposed as most of your contributors to absolute copyism, and it is not for any such object that I would advocate the formation of a Mediæval Museum. I am, indeed, strongly of opinion that it would have a contrary tendency. A man who has only a particular and limited set of specimens of art to refer to, often copies them *ad nauseam*: you can detect his one or two types in every thing he touches; but give that man free and constant access to the inexhaustible treasures of art, and, if he have a spark of genius within him, he at once ceases to copy, his mind becomes expanded, every fresh specimen he studies enlarges his ideas, and he soon finds it easier to design than to imitate.

This is just what we want for our humbler class of artists, such as our carvers and decorators. They have not the means, nor even can they spare the time, for travelling and study: they have ability, but it wants cultivation and forcing. I have occasionally obtained funds to enable carvers to visit the best old examples, and the result has been most satisfactory, but employers generally say, "It is not our place to pay for these men learning their business." An architect certainly cannot afford to pay for this, and the men themselves have not the means, and the consequence is, that our buildings are spoiled through the want of knowledge and education on the part of our carvers. Had they means of constant reference to an extensive collection of casts of the finest specimens of art, the case would be wonderfully different: not only would their minds be continually freshened and elevated, by recurrence to the finest works of their predecessors in art, but I feel confident that their whole tone would be so enriched and fertilised that new phases of art would be constantly and spontaneously developing themselves, and architectural sculpture and decoration would once more become the living product of the present time, instead of the dead repetition of the past. I am the more convinced of this, as

I always find that the study of the finest specimens of mediæval art has a tendency to lead the mind back to nature, the true source of vitality, and suggests modes in which natural productions can best be used as the groundwork of our decorations.

The same arguments I have made use of as regards our subordinates or coadjutors in the carrying out of our designs, apply equally to ourselves. Our minds want constantly the refreshing influences which can only be gained by frequent reference to the finest specimens of art.

I need hardly say, that I have been led to trouble you on this subject by the offer about to be made to the public of the splendid collection made by the late Mr. Cottingham, and by the memorial which is about to be presented on the subject to Government by a large body of architects, artists, and other friends of art.

The subject is so important, and the opportunity so favourable, that I think our profession ought to rise *en masse*, and urge it by every argument upon the attention of the Legislature. Such an opportunity can scarcely ever recur, and, if lost, we may go on *ad infinitum* as we now are.

The great difficulty with, no doubt, be in providing a suitable building. Mr. Cottingham's collection can, of course, be only viewed as the nucleus of what we require, but *as a nucleus* it is invaluable. To it would probably soon be added the collection made by Mr. Barry for the Houses of Parliament, and additional specimens would be constantly flowing in from all quarters, so that the space required would be very extensive. To be useful it must also be *central*, a circumstance which again adds to the difficulty by adding to the cost. Against this we have only one set-off—that we do not need an architectural building. Any place which will protect the specimens and students from the weather would be sufficient. It has been suggested that the space between the approach to Waterloo-bridge and the unfinished end of Somerset-house would be suitable, and I think it would be particularly so, especially from the number of storeys which may be obtained both above and below the level of the roadway.

Supposing space to be provided, the next question would be as to the regulations under which it should be placed, and the means to be provided for the constant extension of the collection.

I suppose, to begin with, it must be placed under a committee or trustees, selected chiefly from among architects and antiquaries, who would be empowered to obtain contributions whether in money or specimens, and to dispose of such funds as they may receive either in this way or from Government. They should at once commence collecting casts of all the finest effigies and monuments which remain in our churches, &c. And I think they should have power to make grants in aid of architects who may wish, for their own purposes, to obtain casts of finer examples, whether at home or abroad. Thus, for instance, if an architect, travelling in France, see a fine work of mediæval art, which would be especially useful to him in some work on which he may be engaged, but which would be too costly for him to procure, and perhaps too bulky to be kept in his home, he might share the cost with the committee of the museum, and make it their property: thus the individual and the public will be at once benefited. This system I look forward to as the *one great* means of enriching the museum. I am sure that I could myself annually bring in, both from our own churches and from the continent, very valuable accessions, if the cost were to be partly met in this way. We should all be looking out on our journeys for specimens for our museum, and a feeling would be generated which would add a new pleasure to travel.

I must, however, say one word on the subject of original fragments. As a general rule, I think that the collection of them should be strongly discouraged. I strongly hold with local collections of this kind, as at St. Mary's Abbey, at York, where the fragments dug up from time to time are deposited in a building

on the site: there they retain all their value and interest, but once remove them, and half their value is gone. The great and only objection which I see to a mediæval museum is the risk of its affording a premium to spoliation, and I hold that at the very outset some stringent rules should be laid down as a safeguard against this danger; though it is obvious that many things are so entirely disconnected from the building to which they may have belonged, that it is quite desirable that they should be admitted into such a museum. Indeed the collection should contain manuscripts, illuminations, plate and metal work, and other moveables unconnected with any particular site. The remaining objects which would have to be considered would be the extent, and regulations of admission, and the means for keeping up a constant fund.

It is clear that the public must not be admitted freely, and every day, or there will be no chance for students. I am inclined to think that they should be admitted three days in the week, and then on payment of a shilling. I think architects, and others who can be expected to afford it, should pay a small annual sum, which would give them free admission, and enable them to give tickets to carvers and artificers, which would admit them freely for a certain time. Architects' pupils, &c., should pay some trifling sum, as 10s. for a yearly ticket, or, in the absence of such ticket, should pay 6d. for each admission. Artificers, without tickets from subscribers, might pay the same, or half that sum; but the great object should be to give every facility for their free admission, while at the same time means are taken for keeping up a constant fund for the extension of the collection.

I will not, however, trouble you further on the subject. I only wish to call attention to its importance, and there is no doubt that the details can readily be arranged.

GEO. GILBERT SCOTT.

* In our volumes for 1845 and 1846, at which time we were strongly urging the importance of establishing a Museum of National Architecture, will be found a number of communications on the subject. Mr. Godwin, in 1845, and again in December, 1846, addressed a letter on the subject to the late Marquis of Northampton, as one of the trustees of the British Museum,* who, in consequence, sketched a plan for a comprehensive museum of Fine Arts. This, it seems, Lord Northampton continued to entertain, as, only a few days before his lamented decease, he addressed a letter to Mr. Shaw, repeating the heads of this project.

A COURSE FOR AMATEUR ARCHITECTS.

No one can fully enjoy travelling without such an insight into the principles of architecture as may enable him to appreciate the finest productions of the art; and whether the observer contemplate the remains of Grecian art as exhibited in the matchless Parthenon, or in specimens still existing on the shores of Ionia, Sicily, Attica, and the Peloponnese, whether he visit the seats of Roman building, the Coliseum, the Pantheon, the Aqueducts, or other works, which mark the greatness and the architectural skill of ancient Italian buildings, whether, in the streets of Rome, Vincenza, Genoa, Ancona, Turin, Florence, or other cities, he look out for the works of more modern Italian art by Guilio Romano, Michaelangelo, Palladio, Sansovino, San Michael, Brammossi, whether he pace the dim aisles of the magnificent cathedrals of the middle ages, the Cologne and Strasburg of Germany—the Rheims, Beauvais, and Rouens of France—the Seville and Cordovas of Spain—the Salisbury, Yorks, and Lincoln of our own land,—he should be able to discriminate between the respective styles, as one style differs from another, and as each style differs within itself,—he should so far know what constitutes the standard of excellence as to be able to say why this is pure and graceful, why

* The heads of this will be found in our 22d volume, p. 65.
† From a paper by the very Rev. E. B. Rieu, read before the Architectural Institute of Scotland.